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and character was to the following effect—"pray for black Bran." The latter, therefore, is certainly not the tomb of St. Cronan, but that of Bran M'Colman, who was abbot of Roscrea, and died in 926. In the church-yard of Roscrea there still remains a stone cross, which, with another stone now forming part of the church-yard wall, the inhabitants call the shrine of St. Cronan. The following is a representation of this cross.



ST. CRONAN'S CROSS.

On the opposite side of the road to the church, stands on the brink of a mill-pond formed by the river, one of those ancient round towers so common in Ireland, and which afford an inexhaustible subject for antiquarian discussion. It is said to be eighty feet high, and is capped with a wooden umbrella-like roof.

Towards the Limerick end of the town is the venerable steeple of a monastery, founded in 1490 by Bibiana, daughter of O'Dempsey, and widow of Mulroony O'Carroll, nicknamed, *nafeasoge*, or with the beard. This steeple serves at present for a belfry to the Roman Catholic chapel, to which it forms the entrance from the street.

The fairs held at Roscrea are very ancient. It is a well authenticated fact, that the Irish assembled at one of these fairs, on the festival of Saints Peter and Paul, in the year 942, beat the Danes, who had concentrated their forces from Limerick and Galway with intent to surprise and plunder the natives.* On that occasion the people who resorted to the fair, although congregated from different parts of the country, and of course strangers to each other, did not wait to be attacked in the town, but sallied out, and after a sanguinary conflict which took place near

* The line by which the Danish plunderers retreated may be easily traced from the skeletons at the present day. They fled towards Moneygall, on the road to Limerick, and most of the townlands in the line of their flight appear to derive their names from the transaction. Thus numbers of human bones have been found in pits between Clonegana and the high road, and more of them in the bog between Moneygall and Cullenwain. It is curious that the bones found have been principally wherever there was either a dry sandy soil or bog. The absorbing nature of the sand preserves them in the one case, and the antiseptic quality of the bog in the other; but wherever the bodies were interred in rich earth they were sooner decomposed. The route they followed was by the stream called Owris, as if from the Irish *Oiris*, a stop, delay, or hindrance, because it interrupted the Danish flight, thence by Cloneganna, from *Cluan*, a retired place, and *geanam*, a sword, or *geangad*, a mauling or beating, by Clashagad, from *glas*, a field, and *gidad*, a wounding, by Finglas, *fion*, troops, and *glas*, a green, and by Laughawn, (*Locc*, a pool, and *Un* evil) to Moneygall, where the battle is said to have ended.—Moneygall seems to be derived from *Moin*, a bog, and *Gall* a foreigner or stranger. Several human bones have been found in a moor near it.

Carrickhill, defeated the invaders, killing Olfin, the Danish chieftain, and four thousand of his men. It is from this circumstance that the hill of Carrick became so remarkable as to be selected to give a title to the noble house of Butler.

Roscrea was famed in former times not only for the magnificence of its buildings and valour of its inhabitants, but as a seat of practical religion also. Accordingly we find that St. Canice, who was born in 516 and died in 599, wrote a copy of the four gospels here. It was called *Glass Kennic*, or chain of Canice, and Archbishop Usher tells us that it was preserved in this town until his time. There was also a copy of the gospels written by Dimma, a scribe, the son of Engus, son of Carthin, which possibly is the MS. in the possession of Sir William Betham, which latter certainly was preserved at Roscrea in a most curiously wrought and ornamented box. The reader may consult a paper by Henry Joseph M. Mason, Esq., published in the transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, and in the Irish Antiquarian researches, by Sir William Betham, and a letter from Mr. Cooke to that author, published in the Dublin Philosophical Journal, for much information relative to Roscrea, as well as on the subject of the copy of the gospels just mentioned, which found its way to Sir William Betham in the following manner.

The late Rev. Philip Meagher, formerly parish priest of Birr, found it amongst the books of an uncle who had been a clergyman in Roscrea, and handed it to a Dr. Harrison of Nenagh, (since dead) who sold it to Mr. Mason, librarian to the King's Inns' Society, and he parted with it to Sir William Betham. Such being the history of the MS., it is strange how Sir William could have supposed this relic to have been found by boys seeking birds' nests in the Devil's Bit mountain, as he asserts it was, in the Irish Antiquarian Researches.

The ground about Roscrea is exceedingly fertile, and the town is still the grand emporium of trade to all the surrounding towns and districts. B.

We had, on reading the above, an idea that our respected Correspondent had quoted Sir W. BETHAM erroneously; and on reference to the *Antiquarian Researches*, find, that so far from Sir WILLIAM asserting the box was found "by boys seeking birds' nests in the Devil's Bit Mountain," his words are, "I conclude he (Mr. Mason) must have been imposed upon in the story of the box and MS. being found in the cave of a mountain; where it is obvious the latter could not have remained a month without decomposition." We are sure our Correspondent did not intend to misrepresent, but we must not be accessory to so serious a charge as that made against Sir W. BETHAM, which we find to be altogether unfounded.—Ed.

ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS OF NORTH AMERICA.

The settlers in North America frequently make shooting excursions into the woods, for the double purposes of pleasure and for procuring game. Being once on one of these shooting parties, during the American war, we met with an adventure which was very near being fatal to our party. Having set out somewhat before day-light, duly accounted and furnished with provision, we struck into the woods in hopes of meeting deer, great numbers of which live in the forests; but to our great mortification not one was to be seen in any direction. We had an Indian with us as a guide, as being better acquainted with the haunts of the game than a European. Having advanced a considerable way into the woods without meeting any game except a few red deer, one of these at length came within range of our rifles. The instant it was struck it reeled, fell, and with another shot we dispatched it. Having skinned the animal, and kindled a fire, we were preparing to cook it, when a cry so shrill met our ears, that we were for a moment paralysed. The Indian guide whom we had along with us instantly recognised the terrific war-whoop of a tribe of the Cherokee Indians, then at war with the English. What was to be done? We were only six in number, and by the yells of the savages we concluded that there were a little army of them collected together. To endeavour to run away would be useless, as there would be no chance of escaping our pursuers. We were each armed

with a rifle, and had plenty of ammunition, but what would it avail against overwhelming numbers. However, we resolved to fight to the last, rather than fall into the hands of the savages. Chance, more properly speaking, Providence afforded us a way by which we could more readily maintain a successful fight against an enemy so very much our superior in number. About one hundred paces from the spot where we halted, there was a rocky eminence, the approach to which was very difficult, except by a narrow causeway leading to the summit. Hither our guide directed us to make the best of our way, as time was precious; and we could now plainly see the Indians not more than two hundred yards from us. They had perceived the smoke caused by our kindling a fire, but upon its being extinguished they lost sight of the place where we were. If we had remained where we first halted, we would not have been discovered so soon, but we would have to fight on equal ground with an unequal and savage enemy. Accordingly we retreated slowly and cautiously to the eminence, and we had scarcely reached the summit when the terrific war-whoop again struck our ears, for it was now quite manifest that they had perceived us, and that we would have a hard game to play for our lives. They were now but a short distance from us, yelling and whooping like demons. We gave them a volley, which though it checked them for a moment, did not allow sufficient time to reload, for the following instant the first of them was on the causeway: a shot from our faithful Indian stopped his career. On seeing him fall, his companions, again pausing for a moment, gave us time to reload, and give them another volley, which took down all that were on the causeway. This had the effect of checking them, and they retreated in confusion, but, as it afterwards appeared, with the intention of assailing us in another quarter. One of our party giving up all for lost, fainted, and the Indians thinking that he had been killed by their fire, gave a loud and terrific shout. Indeed, to say the best of it, ours was a desperate case, being in the forests, far from aid, and only five of us capable of fighting. We were, indeed, perfectly conscious that it was impossible to escape unless Providence worked a miracle in our favour. The Indians having consulted, their fire ceased, and they divided into two parties; one to attack us on the causeway, and the other to climb up the rock at our backs, and attack us in the rear. Our fate now seemed decided,—and what a fate it was! To be scalped by the merciless savages, or reserved for tortures, the very thoughts of which were enough to make our blood run cold. We had not a moment to decide—but divided our small party—one to repel those attacking us on the causeway, and the other to resist those attempting the assault in our rear. They approached quickly, and, in the face of all opposition, by the effect of numbers, succeeded in disarming and binding each and every one of us; and were just commencing their infernal tortures, when a party of English troops emerged from a neighbouring forest, upon perceiving whom, the savages fled, leaving us thankful to Providence for obtaining so wonderful a deliverance. We were unbound, and treated with the greatest kindness. The soldiers to whom we owed our deliverance had been sent into the wood to apprehend some deserters, and were it not for that circumstance, trifling as it may appear, the consequence would have been fatal to us. We counted sixteen Indians dead, and twenty-four wounded, in and about the causeway. It is needless to say we availed ourselves of the escort to return to our quarters, and had every reason to be thankful to that God who had not deserted us in the most extreme peril, and as it then appeared almost forlorn hope.

W. B. M.

SIMPLE SCIENCE—ZINC.

Zinc, or spelter, as it is generally called by our English artists, is one of the most abundant metals in nature. Its properties are such that it seems to form a link between the brittle and malleable metals. It flattens under the hammer, and, therefore, cannot be readily procured in small pieces, yet it has been stated, that when made very hot it becomes quite brittle, and may be reduced to powder. It is found principally in Derbyshire; although there are beds of ore that produce it in abundance in

China, where it is made into coins, which have generally a square hole in the centre, that they may be strung, and more easily counted. Zinc is the most inflammable metal known, and if beaten into thin leaves will readily take fire and burn. It is procured by distillation from its ores, in the following way: the pounded ore with powdered charcoal is put into large pots, which are placed in a common furnace; these pots have tubes fixed in the bottom, and after the tops of the pots are covered, a strong fire is made under them, so that the metallic zinc being of a volatile nature, runs through the tubes into receivers placed for it. When combined with other metals, it forms some of the most valuable alloys. Three parts of copper and two of zinc, constitute brass; five of copper and one of zinc, forms pinchbeck; and a mixture of tin, copper, and zinc, forms bronze. Brass is a valuable alloy on many accounts, especially the superior brightness of its colour, in its not being so liable to tarnish by exposure to the atmosphere as copper, and in its being more readily melted, and more malleable when cold. Sieves of extreme fineness are woven with brass wire, after the manner of cambric-weaving, which could not possibly be done with copper wire. It has lately been proved that at a temperature of between two hundred and ten and three hundred degrees of Fahrenheit, zinc is really a malleable metal, and that after being annealed and wrought, it continues soft and flexible, and does not return to its original brittleness. This is an important discovery, and in future there will be no difficulty in its being formed into vessels of capacity, and sheathings for the bottoms of ships; it has already been tried with advantage for covering the roofs of houses and making water-pipes.

NICKEL.

Nickel in its pure state is a fine white metal, very malleable, nearly as brilliant as silver, and more attractable by the loadstone than iron; indeed magnetic needles have been made of purified nickel, and have been esteemed more than those of steel, as being less liable to be affected by a damp atmosphere. The most abundant mines of this metal are in Germany, but it has lately been raised in the parish of St. Ewe, Cornwall, where it occurs at a depth of twenty-five fathoms. It is rather a curious circumstance that all the specimens that have been examined of the stones which have been said to fall from the atmosphere, contain iron alloyed with nickel. These stones, which at different periods have been seen to fall on every quarter of the globe, are supposed by some writers to be cast from a volcano in the moon. So lately as 1805, a shower of them fell in Normandy which covered an extent of three quarters of a league long, and half a league broad. Nickel is employed in China in making white copper, which is a beautiful metallic compound, but it has not been used much elsewhere, excepting in the potteries, where the French manufacturers of porcelain procure from it a very delicate grass-green, which, like other metallic colours, bears the intense heat of their ovens without injury. A hyacinthian colour is also given to flint-glass with this metal, and it might be mixed with iron to great advantage, as an alloy of these two metals would not rust like common iron. The Chinese employ it in conjunction with copper, to make children's toys, and the valuable qualities lately discovered in it show that it might be applied to many important uses, particularly for surgical instruments, compass-needles, and other such articles, as it is not at all liable to rust. Should an easy method of working it ever be discovered, we may possibly find this to be better calculated for a variety of purposes than any other metal.

E. B.

THE BULLFINCH.

In some places this bird is called the thick-bill, the nope, and the hoop. It has a wild, whooping note.

The head is black, and large in proportion to the body, the breast of a crimson scarlet, other parts of a slate or darker colour. The beak parrot-like.

This bird is very docile, and has no song of its own, but readily learns, and never forgets whatever it is taught by the whistle or pipe. The hen learns as well as the male, and though hung among other caged birds, they invariably retain their acquired melodies. They are sometimes taught